

Program opens Windows to networking Macintosh

The Macintosh computer, given up for dead just a few years ago by high-technology pundits, is alive and well. That's clear from Apple Computer Inc.'s announcement last week of improving sales and profit for its third quarter.

Most of the creative community around the world is still dedicated to the Macintosh. It remains the primary tool of choice for those involved in graphic design work, high-end video editing and other creative processes. Some of the most sophisticated design tools are available only in the Mac environment, although a few have been "ported" over to Windows systems.

There is also an attitude associated with the Macintosh. In a world of corporate computing homogeneity, there is a certain rebel cachet in being a Mac user. They're a steadfast bunch, loyal to both Apple and its technology.

But is the Macintosh still a good choice for entrepreneurs? Definitely — particularly if you are in a line of business with links to the creative community. And it's great for those who want to take advantage of the renowned simplicity of the Mac environment.

Still, many people hold back, thinking that a Mac can't easily connect and share files with Windows-based personal computer systems. But a piece of software known as Dave is an excellent solution to the dilemma.

This little known program from Arlington, Tex.-based Thursby Software System (www.thursby.com) allows Macintosh and Windows computers to co-exist on the same computer network. Dave basically makes the various Windows systems think that they are linked to just another Windows machine when they are dealing with a Mac. The approach seems to be, "if you can't beat 'em, fool 'em."

Dave is installed on your Macintosh, and makes it emulate the Windows networking protocol. The installation is straightforward — simply configure a few files and reboot the machine. Upon restarting, your Mac will look like a Windows machine to every other computer on your Windows network.

You'll see your Mac listed in the Windows "network neighbourhood," and can access files located



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on it by simply dragging them to your PC. Similarly, on your Mac, you can establish direct links to various Windows directories and tap into any of the files located there.

Dave also lets any user linked to your Windows network gain access to a printer attached to your Mac, and vice versa, giving you more bang out of your high-tech buck.

The program shows how a small expenditure — Dave costs \$149 (U.S.) through the Web site and may be less by mail order or in stores — can go a long way. I've been operating the program for more than a year on my old Macintosh 5300c, which is being used for a few video projects. It's reliable and has extended the life and usefulness of the machine.

Understand that Dave simply lets you take files back and forth — it doesn't provide translation between different file formats. There are other programs that do a good job of that, such as MacLink Plus. But with Dave, you can easily establish a small office environment with a combination of Macs and PCs, and work on particular documents without regard to which technology you are using.

You may also go one step further and pick up a copy of Microsoft Office for Macintosh. Using that and Dave, you can work on Word or Excel documents from either the Windows or Macintosh system.

One final benefit: In a sea of dull, beige Windows PCs, you can introduce a bit of panache by picking up one of the new, brightly coloured iMacs.

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